



Education
Funding
Agency

School Capacity: academic year 2015 to 2016

April 2017

1. About this release

This release reports on school capacity information in state-funded primary and secondary schools as of May 2016. Data are as reported by local authorities in the annual School Capacity (SCAP) Survey.

There is information on the numbers of primary and secondary school places, unfilled school places and pupils in excess of school capacity. It also provides pupil number forecasts up to 2020 to 21 at primary level and 2022 to 23 at secondary level.

Findings in this report are at a national level though information at regional and local authority (LA) level are included in the accompanying tables. School level information for capacity and planning area level information for forecasts and planned places is also provided in the release's underlying data section.

Figures within this release are used to underpin Basic Need allocations.

The numbers in this document are rounded to the nearest thousand, actual numbers are in the accompanying tables.

2. School Capacity

Places added

The number of places added (or removed) is equal to the net change in capacity within a given period.

Between 2015 and 2016, 104,000 primary places and 32,000 secondary places were added to the school estate.

There has been a net increase of 735,000 extra places since 2010, 510,000 primary (as deemed) places, and 225,000 secondary (as deemed) places (see note 8).

Figure 1: School capacity year on year change

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of primary places	4,228,000	4,253,000	4,314,000	4,416,000	4,528,000	4,634,000	4,738,000
Primary year on year change		26,000	60,000	102,000	112,000	106,000	104,000
Number of secondary places	3,563,000	3,609,000	3,601,000	3,637,000	3,712,000	3,756,000	3,788,000
Secondary year on year change		46,000	- 8,000	37,000	75,000	44,000	32,000

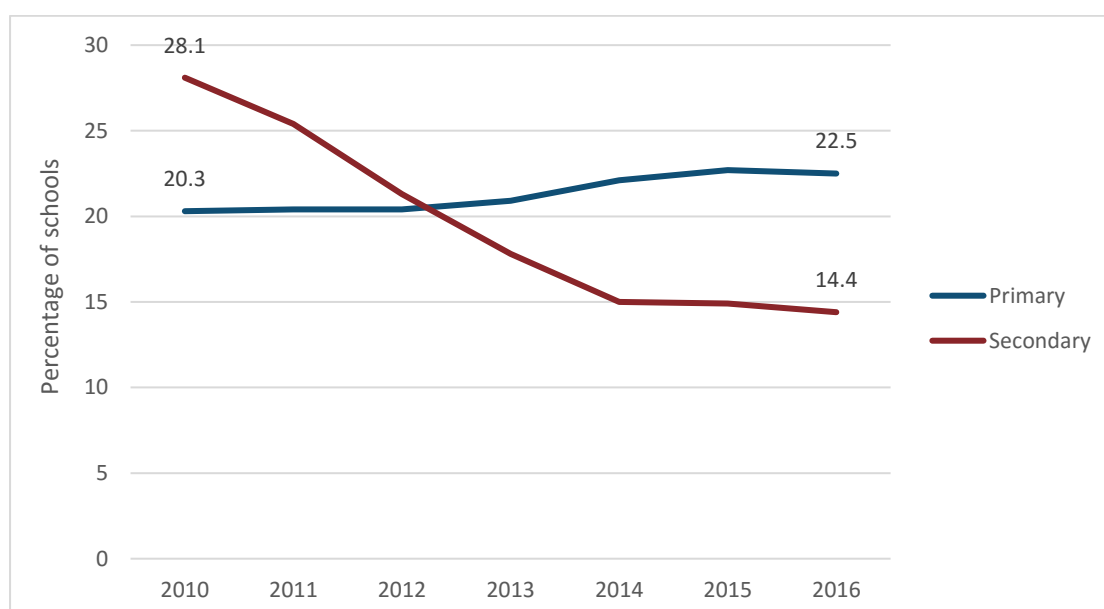
Schools in excess of capacity

A school is identified as in excess of capacity when their number on roll is greater than or equal to capacity.

The percentage of state-funded primary schools that were full or had pupils in excess of capacity has decreased slightly from 22.7 per cent (3,807 schools) in May 2015 to 22.5 per cent (3,781 schools) in May 2016.

For state-funded secondary schools, the percentage of schools that were full or had pupils in excess of capacity also decreased – from 14.9 per cent (500 schools) in May 2015 to 14.4 per cent (487 schools) in May 2016. This has decreased from 28.1 per cent (930 schools) in 2010.

Figure 2: The percentage of schools that are full or have one or more pupils in excess of school capacity



Pupils in excess of capacity

Where the number on roll is higher than capacity, the number of pupils in excess of capacity is the difference.

Having one or more pupils in excess of capacity does not show that a school is overcrowded. Many schools can comfortably accommodate pupils above their measured capacity, when it is safe to do so.

The number of pupils in excess of capacity has decreased since 2010, from 97,000 in 2010 to 50,000 in 2016, though has remained relatively steady since 2014.

In primary schools, there were 30,000 pupils in excess of capacity, a slight decrease compared to the 31,000 pupils in 2015.

In secondary schools, there were over 20,000 pupils in excess of capacity in 2016, a slight increase compared to under 20,000 pupils in 2015. Although this is less than the 56,000 secondary pupils in excess of capacity reported in 2010.

Unfilled places

The number of unfilled places is the amount of capacity above number on roll. A school is identified as having unfilled places if the capacity is higher than the number of pupils on roll.

An efficient system requires a degree of unfilled places at any point. A range of other factors also contributes to this picture. Unfilled places are evidence of local authorities planning ahead of future need, as the increase in pupil numbers at primary level over recent years will begin to move into secondary level over the coming years. Unfilled places can also be attributed to the building of completely new schools, which fill up from the bottom, leaving space in the upper years until those year groups work their way through. In some areas, low or declining need for places will also contribute to the number of unfilled places.

For primary and secondary schools, the total number of unfilled places has been increasing across recent years, from 814,000 places in 2010 to 1,098,000 places in 2016.

In 2016, there were 461,000 unfilled places in primary schools and 636,000 unfilled places in secondary schools.

The percentage of schools with unfilled places has decreased in primary schools though has been increasing in secondary schools since 2010. As of May 2016, 77.5 per cent of primary schools and 85.6 per cent of secondary schools had one or more unfilled places.

Figure 3: Percentage of schools with unfilled places

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Primary	79.7	79.6	79.6	79.1	77.9	77.3	77.5
Secondary	71.9	74.6	78.7	82.2	85.0	85.1	85.6

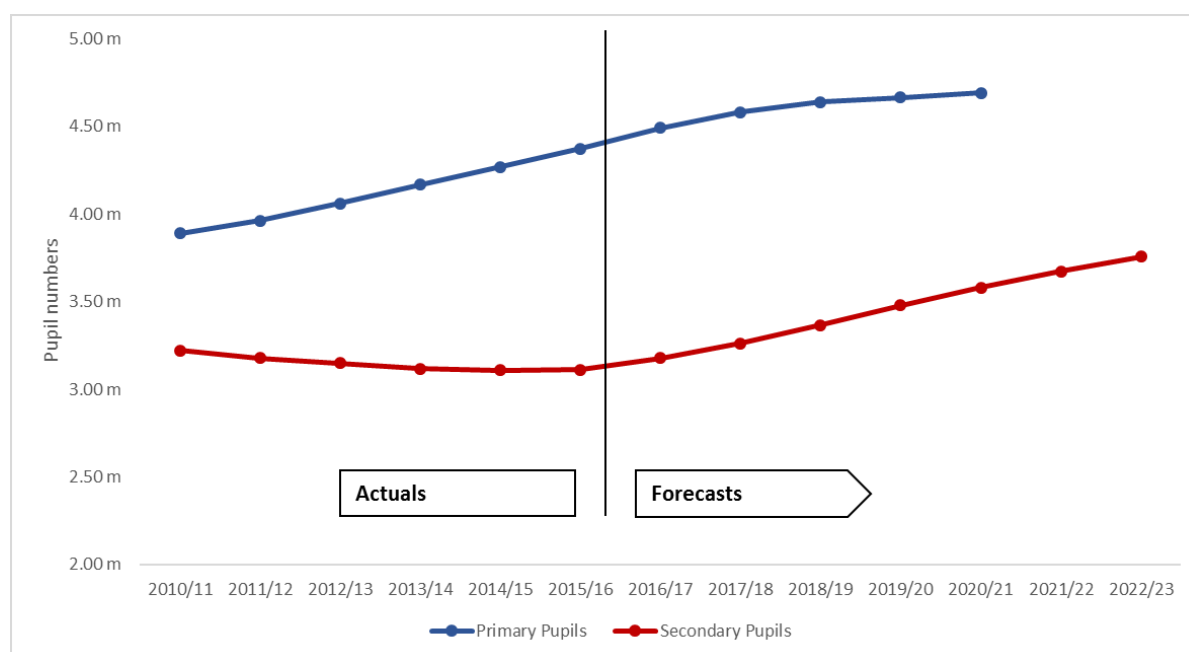
3. Pupil Forecasts

Each local authority uses their local knowledge to generate pupil forecasts, which reflect the number of pupils they expect to have to provide a place for in each academic year. These forecasts include place funded through developer contributions (Section 106/CIL).

Local authorities provide forecasts 5 years ahead for primary pupils and 7 years ahead for secondary pupils.

Forecasts suggest that primary pupil numbers may begin to plateau beyond 2020/21 though secondary pupil numbers are expected to continue to rise as the recent surge in primary pupil numbers begins to arrive in the secondary phase.

Figure 4: Actual pupils of primary and secondary school age and forecasts for 2016/17 – 2022/23



4. LA Planned Places

LA planned places are collected via our Capital Spend survey. They are the number of places local authorities plan to create, where funding has been committed. LA planned places exclude those created through centrally funded DfE programmes.

Local authorities have reported that they are planning to create 211,000 additional mainstream places between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

5. Technical Notes

Data collection

1. Information in this release has been derived from three data sources:
 - a) School Capacity survey – an annual survey returned by local authorities; collects capacity and forecast information.
 - b) Capital Spend survey – an annual survey returned by local authorities; collects information on local authority planned places and associated costs, excluding DfE centrally funded programmes.
 - c) School census – A termly census of all schools in England, used to derive number on roll figures.

Data coverage and quality

2. Includes information for state-funded primary and secondary schools in England. Figures relate to 2015/16 academic year, but historic figures are provided at a national level in table A1.
3. Forecast data is generated by local authorities based on their own data and local knowledge. These forecasts are challenged extensively during data cleaning processes, although there are variations in the forecasting methodologies and data sources used across local authorities. This means there is the potential for local anomalies within the methodology that the Department is not aware of. Thus, as with any forecast figures should be taken with care.
4. Forecasting accuracy is derived retrospectively, once actual pupil numbers for the forecast data become available. Most local authorities' forecasting accuracy tends to be within +/-1% one year ahead.
5. The forecasts provided by local authorities are used to derive Basic Need funding. Norfolk will not be funded based upon the forecasts provided in this release as they are subject to change – revised forecasts for Norfolk will be included in the 2017 school capacity release for comparison purposes.
6. Academies are not required to complete a net capacity assessment; therefore, their net capacity is reported as per their funding agreement.
7. LA planned places are based on local authority estimates. Only places added in valid SCAP 16 planning areas are included.

Notes for users

8. Minor corrections have been made to some figures in table A1 relating to unfilled places and pupils in excess of capacity in 2010, 2012 and 2013. In these years, one or two schools were incorrectly assigned to the opposite category. This has been rectified in the current time series but not in versions from previous years.

9. Pupils in developer funded (Section 106/CIL) places are now included in main planning area forecasts, and recorded separately at planning area level. In previous years, they were excluded from the main planning area forecasts and only recorded at local authority level.
10. For capacity, schools are reported as deemed. Therefore, for a middle-deemed primary school, all capacity is counted as primary and for a middle-deemed secondary school all capacity is counted as secondary. Pupil forecast data is split by phase, so primary includes year groups R-6 only, and secondary includes year groups 7-13.
11. Number on roll is the number of sole and dual main registered pupils attending a school as reported via the school census. Number on roll (actuals) within the forecast tables are based on the January census. Number on roll within the capacity tables is taken from the May census to align with the point in time capacity data is collected.

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